

Blaisdell's S. M. P. T.

By Gorham Bell.

Blanche paused for a moment in the doorway and looked hopefully about her. She hated the apartment with its shabby carpet, its stuffy atmosphere and the cheap small talk of the medium priced boarding house, but it was at least better than the cheerless little room that even her feminine ingenuity could not transform into the semblance of home.



IT WAS LATE WHEN THEY FINALLY STOOD ON THE STEPS.

the front room on the first floor instead of the rear hall rooms on the third and fourth floors.

Colonel McGregor was studying a chess problem over in one corner, and various little groups were formed about the room. Blanche had just decided that the hall room was preferable to the piano when Mrs. Castleton transferred her attention from the amorous pair at the piano to the newcomer.

"Oh, Miss Philbrick," she called. "May I speak with you a moment?" Blanche came forward, wondering what Mrs. Castleton might have to say. Evidently from the fat smile that adorned the landlady's face she was about to ask a favor.

"Are you to be here for dinner Thursday?" went on Mrs. Castleton. "It's Thanksgiving," continued the matron, seeing from Blanche's face that she did not understand. "All the rest of the folks are going home for the day or will spend it with friends."

"I have no friends here in the city," said Blanche frankly, "and home is so dreadfully far away."

Home had never seemed so far away as at that moment. She had left her home when her father married again. There was no place she might call home, not even the little room upstairs.

Mrs. Castleton's face fell at the announcement. "I was thinking that if you were going out, too," she explained, "I might let the servants have the day out. Then we could have the turkey and things on Sunday," she added as proof that her motives were not mercenary.

Guy Blaisdell noted the girl's embarrassment and came to her relief. "You have left me out of this discussion," he cried gayly. "I'm one of the homeless too. I propose that Miss Philbrick join me in the formation of the Society For Making People Thankful!"

Mrs. Castleton eyed Blaisdell apprehensively. She never was certain where his remarks would lead. Only that morning he had led her on in praise of the butter and had wound up by declaring it to be the strongest butter he had ever tasted. Blaisdell caught her glance and hastened to put her mind at rest.

"This is an admirable order," he ran on. "I know where there is a place where they give real old fashioned New England cooking. They are going to spread themselves Thursday. If Miss Philbrick will be my guest she will make me very thankful and at the same time she will make the servants thankful, too, by giving them a chance to go to the matinee instead of worrying over an elaborate dinner for two. Will you come, Miss Philbrick?"

For a moment Blanche hesitated. It was not that she did not want to go—her soul revolted at the very thought of Thanksgiving dinner in Mr. Castleton's gloomy dining room—but she had not yet accustomed herself to the informality of dinner with a comparatively unknown man without a chaperon.

She knew that chaperons were not considered necessary where girls carried their own living, still it seemed a little daring. But Blaisdell's eager face and Mrs. Castleton's appealing glance decided her. She turned to Blaisdell with a little nod.

"I shall be most happy to accept your invitation," she said, and Mrs. Castleton looked relieved. Thanksgiving and Christmas were her bugbears. Once in her own room Blanche was amazed at her action. She had been in the city for eight months, and in all that time not once had she accepted any of the numerous offers of entertainment. She liked Blaisdell better than any of the others in the house. There was something fresh and wholesome about him, very different from the assumed sophistication of most of the men. He was past thirty, and a bald patch on the back of his head was already beginning to be in evidence, but he was still a boy at heart, and from the first Blanche had been attracted to him.

The dinner was all that Blaisdell had promised. A New England girl who had sought to make her way in the city had persuaded her mother to come on and start a restaurant. Two floors in a good neighborhood were simply fitted up, and much of the New England atmosphere was preserved—except in the prices.

The rooms were crowded today, but Blaisdell had reserved a table, and Blanche thoroughly enjoyed a dinner that was so unlike the fare at the boarding house.

"I come over here very often," explained Blaisdell when at last the coffee and mince and pumpkin pies were served. "It's as near as a bachelor can get to home here in the city."

"It does taste like home," asserted Blanche. "I grow so tired of Mrs. Castleton's weekly routine."

"You will have to come here often then," said Blaisdell promptly. "It would be all the more pleasant for company. It's lonesome eating alone."

"I think it is more dreary to eat with a whole roomful of people with whom you have so little in common," said Blanche, with a sigh.

"It is so much more lonesome in the city with all the people you don't know than in the country where there are so few people whom you do know."

"I don't think that we are cut out for city folk," agreed Blaisdell, with a laugh. "Let's get over to the park for a little walk before the theater."

"You are going to the theater?" asked Blanche. "Surely you do not want to spend the evening in Mrs. Castleton's stuffy parlor?"

"Heaven forbid!" cried Blanche. "But you don't know what a treat it will be."

Blaisdell looked as though perhaps he might guess. He knew that she did not go out in the evenings, and he knew what a hall bedroom was like, but he only smiled as he led the way to the cashier's desk.

It was late when they finally stood on the steps of the boarding house and Blanche gave a little sigh of contentment.

"It has been a perfect day," she said. "Instead of a most miserable one. I don't know how to thank you enough."

"I am the one to give thanks," said Blaisdell, with a laugh. "Look here: It's only fair to tell you that I'm going to try my hardest to make you Mrs. Blaisdell before next Thanksgiving. This is not a proposal. It would not be polite to propose to you so soon, but I want you to know that I'm going to do my best to win you before another year passes."

Blanche wondered that her heart should beat so rapidly at the frank speech. She liked Blaisdell the better for his honesty, and for an instant her hand lay over the muscular one that was inserting the key in the lock.

"It will not be very hard," she whispered. "Have you not enrolled me in the Society For Making People Thankful?"

Reforming Her Vocabulary. A young woman of Quaker descent, according to the New York Sun, is now making an attempt to eliminate from her vocabulary the forms of speech peculiar to that sect.

"All my life," she said, "I have used my 'thees' and 'thous' as my father and mother and my grandfathers and grandmothers did before me. I was so accustomed to those expressions that it never occurred to me that there could be any disadvantage in their peculiarity. But when I went to work in a dry goods store I was disillusioned. I found then that Quaker speech, especially behind the counter, makes a mark of the speaker. In our store I met other clerks with every imaginable kind of a foreign accent, but nobody pays any attention to them. It is only I—poor I—with my Quaker theelings and thonging that catches the ear of the multitude."

"Why, you use the Quaker dialect, don't you? How funny!" says one person after another, with suddenly aroused interest.

"This curiosity concerning me and my 'dialect' has become very annoying, and I am trying to stick to straight English."

The Pittless "Fohn." On a winter's night of 1861 half the town of Glarus, in the Alps, went roaring up in flame to heaven, while the pitiless fohn raged and raged and mocked at the efforts of salvors summoned from half the cantons of Switzerland, and the glow of the burning town was seen a hundred miles away in the Black Forest. The bells were rung for help till the ropes were burned away, and, most gruesome of all, the countless wooden crosses of the churchyard graves furnished almost the last fuel to revive the dying flames.

The fohn is a hot south wind—a kind of Swiss khamseen—which was long supposed to originate in the Sahara and to cross the Mediterranean, finding no height to break upon till it came to the St. Gothard, where it was forced through the pass with concentrated violence. What really causes it is still a matter of doubt, but it can do great mischief still and could do more in the days of wooden houses.—Blackwood's Magazine.

Labor Saving. "You have a stiff neck, Carl?" "Yes; for that reason I haven't been able to look around for work!"—Fisgeude Blatter.

Very Likely Not. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the tragedian in the dungeon scene. "I'm mad, mad, mad!" "You bet," yelled a voice from the gallery. "You ain't near as mad as us fellows that paid to get in!"—Catholic Standard and Times.

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